



For my New Year's Resolution I wanted to get into good shape, so I began lifting weights, running on the treadmill, and eating healthier! Are there any supplements I should take too?

No, you really don't need to take any sport supplements. The truth is weight training alone will make you stronger, increase your metabolism, raise your good cholesterol, increase bone strength, increase self-esteem, and the list gets bigger. The running will burn calories, increase your heart and lung's efficiency to bring in oxygen and excrete carbon dioxide, increase bone strength, increase good cholesterol, and the list runs on.

Unfortunately, supplements advertised for the fitness industry are very rarely based on unbiased, peer-reviewed clinical research. They are not required to be regulated by any agency (government or non-government); they are often times dangerous for one's health, and in some cases illegal.

With that said, how do you improve body composition without supplements? An appropriate diet for your needs, a well designed strength training, and cardiovascular exercise program. If you do not believe me, observe the National Weight Control Registry by the Center for Human Nutrition. <http://www.uchsc.edu/nutrition/WyattJortberg/nwcr.htm>.

Here you can look at the statistics, tips, and success stories of thousands of average people who have lost more than thirty pounds and kept it off for more than a year.

In regards to a healthy diet, you may be asking how much to eat, when to eat, and what to eat after exercise?

This is where nutrition becomes individualized. To help calculate how many calories an individual needs for weight loss, I recommend multiplying your body weight in pounds by ten for females and eleven for males. For example, if you are a 200-pound male, multiply 200 by eleven, which equals 2,200? 2,200 calories is a rough estimate for a 200-pound female to promote weight loss. For weight maintenance, multiply body weight in pounds by twelve or thirteen, and for those who would like to increase their lean muscle mass, multiply body weight by approximately fifteen and follow a well designed strength training program. Individuals who choose to increase their lean muscle mass may also see gains in their body fat. It is very difficult to increase lean muscle mass and lose body fat at the same time.



Some specific foods that can be considered particularly useful for muscle building include low fat cottage cheese and chocolate soymilk or low-fat chocolate milk. The reason for this is that cottage cheese contains both whey protein and casein protein, two important proteins for muscle repair. Chocolate soymilk and chocolate milk reap this award because they contain a perfect ratio of carbohydrate to protein, which will promote muscle repair and replenish glycogen stores. Glycogen is the stored carbohydrate that will be used for the next workout. Glycogen is an important energy source for active Marines and Sailors. Keep in mind that these foods are suggestions and are not the only foods required of a “healthy” diet.

Now you know how many calories to eat and some foods that are as powerful as supplements, so *when* should you eat? I always suggest eating foods with carbohydrate and protein less than two or three hours before a workout. This will ensure enough carbohydrate in your body for your workout and some amino acids (protein) to begin to repair the damaged muscle fibers, while you are damaging them! Post workout is also extremely important. The rapid phase lasts about 20-30 minutes post workout and this is when hormones, such as cortisol and testosterone, come back down from being elevated throughout a workout. Next, comes the intermediate phase, which last about two hours, when the body’s insulin levels are high and want to bring nutrients to the body’s cells. This is the most important time to eat and is your big “window of opportunity” for providing what the body needs for an effective recovery! This is when your body requires protein and carbohydrate, which will vary between individuals. A 3:1 or 4:1 ratio of carbohydrate to protein is a safe place to start. Therefore, if you consume 60 grams of carbohydrate, you should consume about 15 grams of protein. The final phase, also referred to as the longer phase, lasts about two to twenty hours. This is when it is extremely important to continue to eat fruit, vegetables, calcium rich foods, complex carbohydrates, and low fat protein, but the most important part of this phase is to get sleep and rest. Seven to nine hours of sleep is ideal and some active rest, such as walking the dog, playing with children, cooking, watching TV, etc. Proper food consumption will ensure that you get the most out of your workout and help prepare you for your next workout.



Although the diet plays a huge role in the end result of a body composition improvement program, it is most important to realize that you must stick to your program to actually see results. Anybody who works in a fitness center will tell you that January is extremely busy but unfortunately attendance dies off by the first week of February. Most of the time New Year's resolutions will fail because the program is excessive, too rigid to fit into our busy schedules or too intense for our body to withstand for more than a few weeks. Our New Year's resolutions often set us up for failure. So before becoming preoccupied with supplements, the perfect diet, or the perfect bodybuilding program, continue to exercise every day and make small changes to your diet. Some ideas may be to add more fruits and vegetables, low fat milk products, consume more low fat meats instead of higher fat meats, drink less soda and other sugar products, and switch to whole grain bread instead of white bread. Whatever or whenever the change you decide, make it last forever!

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